

TEXAS CITY FOUNDED BY A BLIND GENERAL

A. R. Johnson Lost Sight in
Civil War and Then Built
Marble Falls.

MADE LIFE A SUCCESS

Reared Six Children Whom He
Had Never Seen; at 88 Is
Still Energetic.

Austin, Tex., Nov. 19.—Blindness is a serious impediment to most men, but it did not prevent Gen. A. R. Johnson of Burnet, Tex., from accomplishing whatever purpose he had in mind—and he has had many purposes. After he had lost his sight the General built the city of Marble Falls; made several trips East to interest capital and succeeded; built a water power plant, a schoolhouse, a shoe factory, a cotton mill, obtained a railroad for his town, fought Indians and reared and educated six children whom he never has seen. This is a record of which any man with two good eyes would be proud.

Not only did Johnson refuse to let blindness interfere with any of his projects but he also took a prominent part in Texas politics and civic work after losing his sight. The General is now 88 years old and is as enterprising as ever, seeing things with his keen mind instead of his eyes.

Gen. Johnson's record in the war between the States was as brilliant as his work after the conflict had closed. He could see in the first years of the war. It was in the later part of the fighting that he lost his sight from explosion of a shell. He is one of the few remaining Generals of the Confederacy and has been a resident of Texas for more than sixty years.

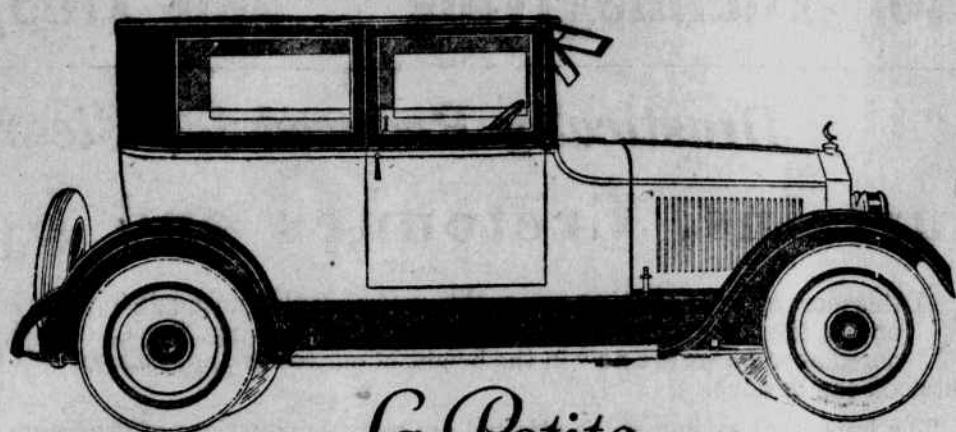
When Gen. Johnson came to Texas before the civil war—Kentucky being his native State—he had charge of a section of the Overland Mail route, one of the links in the Butterfield mail route between New York and San Francisco. The Comanche Indians often attacked and killed the station agents and in the fights with them Johnson always took a hand. Once he and a few others were saved by Sull Ross and his Rangers from the Indians and after Ross became Governor of Texas he and Johnson became warm personal friends. Before the war began the General had a contract to sectionize 256,000 acres for a railroad company along the Pecos River, for which he was to receive 200 sections, and in this work he had further narrow escapes from Indians.

When the war came he hurried to Kentucky and joined Gen. Forrest. Johnson had two brothers in the Union

army, and having been absent in Texas so long it was supposed his sentiments were similar and he obtained valuable information for Forrest. It was at this time that Johnson earned the sobriquet "Stove Pipe Johnson." Learning that there were 800 stands of guns at Newberg, Ind., he took but thirty men across the Ohio River and found some broken down wagons and joints of stove pipe. Mounting the pipe on the wagon wheels he was able to deceive the people of Newberg into thinking that he had powerful cannon trained upon their town, and when he demanded of the Federal officers that they surrender their supplies they did so promptly.

The General lost his eyes in a fight at Grubbs Cross Roads, Ky., and was left for dead upon the battlefield. His obituary was published all over the South, but the Union soldiers picked him up with other wounded and sent him to Boston Harbor prison. Later he was exchanged and spent the remainder of the war period filling cartridges. After Lee surrendered Gen. Johnson and his wife returned to Texas, where he still found his old enemies, the Comanches, on the warpath, and he accompanied several expeditions against them. Then he began his plans to build Marble Falls, liking the location because of the falls in the Colorado River at that point

and the natural dam. Thus the "blind man's town" with its fine water power plant and factories became a reality. Not long after the water power plant was completed a flood in the Colorado swept it away. It did not put a stop to Gen. Johnson's efforts, for he began to rebuild immediately. Every day found him on the banks of the river and he felt of the logs and rocks, felt of the brick foundations and gave directions to the workmen. It was after this that the General erected his schoolhouse, shoe factory and cotton mill, which have proved such successful business ventures that Marble Falls has become a thriving, progressive city.



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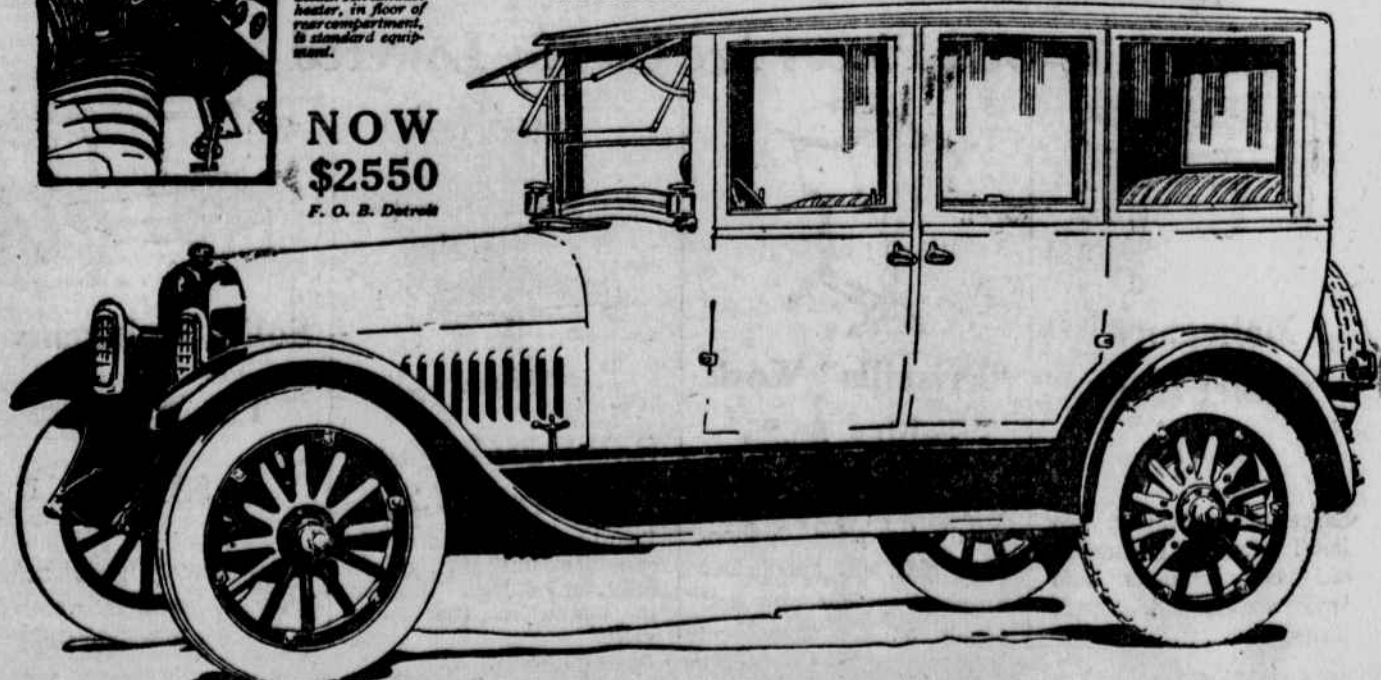
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